

WYCOMBE Wanderers, who have been drawn away from home every year since entering the F.A. Trophy four seasons ago, were out of luck again this week when the draw for the first round was made at Lancaster Gate. The Blues must travel to Bridgend Town on January 14 (writes Stuart Earp).

After going out of the F.A. Cup at the first attempt at Minehead a fortnight ago, Wanderers must have been hoping to have a home tie in the trophy to recoup some of their losses. When it comes to this competition, however, they always seem to be out of luck.

They lost 0-3 at Ilford three years ago and then went out to Slough Town the following year. Last season they recorded their first ever success in the Trophy by winning 1-0 at Barnet but then drew tough Northern club Runcorn away and went down 2-1.

With Enfield so far ahead

in the Isthmian League, Wycombe need a good run in the Trophy to retain interest and attendances but Bridgend are likely to prove difficult opposition.

Situated between Cardiff and Swansea, they play in Division One North of the Southern League where they are currently placed fifth in the table. So far they have won five, drawn three and lost two of their league games.

This is their first season in the Southern League having joined from the Welsh League where they were one of the top clubs. In ten years they were never out of the top four, winning the championship twice.

Their reaction to the draw was one of elation. Club chairman Mr Chris Smart told me: "This is the best draw we could have had. It's funny, I was talking to the manager a couple of days ago and he said the one team he wanted was Wycombe Wanderers at home. Wycombe have a tremendous reputation and it is

bound to attract a good crowd. As far as I'm concerned this draw couldn't have been better."

IMPRESSIVE

Bridgend's confidence is based on their form this season which has seen them lose only four times in 21 league and cup games. Their previous form in the Trophy is impressive. They beat Ferndale at home 2-0 in the first qualifying round and then won 3-2 away to Western League club Paulton Rovers.

Their best win, however, came in the last round when they visited Bideford, Devon. They won 2-0 with goals in the last 12 minutes against a side who reached the first round of the F.A. Cup before losing 3-1 at Portsmouth this season.

Bridgend's F.A. Cup performance, however, was not so impressive. They lost to fellow Southern League Merthyr Tydfil 3-1 at home while Kings Lynn and Dunstable are the two other clubs to have beaten them in the League this season.

One of their best results last season came in the Welsh Cup. They reached the semi-final and lost 2-1 at home to a full Cardiff City first team. This season they

have reached the quarter-finals and it should be remembered that the winners of this competition qualify for a place in the European Cup Winners Cup.

There are several former professionals in the Welsh club's line-up. Skipper is former Leyton Orient and Swansea player Paul Harris at centre back, while the main force in midfield is provided by Gary Jones, ex-Bournemouth, and Jim McInch, ex-Cardiff.

Up front there is Wayne Harris, brother of Leeds United's Carl and Jan Bekker, who bagged 41 league and cup goals last season. Bekker is the club's leading marksman this season with 11. The manager is Lyn Jones, a former Arsenal and Bristol Rovers player who is in his first season in management.

This is the furthest Bridgend have ever got in the Trophy. They were knocked out at Nuneaton last season having reached the third qualifying round.

Wycombe reaction to the draw was one of obvious disappointment. Manager John Reardon joked: "It's another long haul. I think they ought to present us with a cup for all the travelling we have to do."

John said he would be taking a look at the opposition in the near future.

WYCOMBE Wanderers have the chance to make up for one of the major shocks in local football last season when they meet Hungerford Town tomorrow (Saturday) at Loakes Park in the first round of the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup.

It was in March last year that the Blues went down 2-1 at Hungerford in the County Cup semi-final, an embarrassing reverse that many felt was a contributory factor in the dismissal of manager Ted Powell.

Hungerford, who have reached the final for the last two years only to lose to Chesham 4-0 and Slough 2-1 after a replay, are one of the fastest growing non-league clubs. Only last week they were elected to Division 2 of the Isthmian League having spent around £50,000 on ground improvements. They join next season.

They are currently enjoying a good season in the Hellenic League where they are second in the Premier Division. Hungerford have not conceded a goal in their last four outings but they disappointed in going down 1-0 at home to Salisbury in the F.A. Cup.

Nine of last season's first team are still there including Dave Ingram who has scored 15 goals. New player Ian Farr has 18 to his credit. Hungerford general manager Tony Williams said this week: "Our style and method is

excellent at the moment and we are obviously thrilled with this game. Wycombe, after all, is the club we based ourselves on in terms of attitude and sportmanship."

Wanderers have slight doubts over two forwards. Derek Harris was confined to bed with 'flu earlier in the week while Dylan Evans had a back strain. Peter Spittle, another 'flu victim, should return in goal.

Hungerford, incidentally, are spending the morning at Bisham Abbey in Marlow and plan to train before making the short journey to Loakes Park. For Wycombe, this will be their first home Senior Cup Tie for five years.

Terry Male, Burnham's newly converted full-back, will miss his side's awkward tie away to Wokingham because of a broken nose. He suffered the injury in an accidental collision during last Saturday's 1-0 victory over Harefield United in the Kingsmead Athenian League.

But the return of talented defender Dave Hall should ease manager Malcolm Highton's defensive problems. He comes back after three weeks out with a slight lung infection. He will go into the centre of the back four while Keith Bryant switches to left back.

Right back and club captain Mick Jones could return after his minor operation but Ray Hicks is standing by to deputise.

This is a tough match for

Burnham who over-came Buckingham in the first round. Wokingham are riding high near the top of the Isthmian League Division 1 and are still in with a chance of promotion to the Premier.

But Burnham can be encouraged by the knowledge that they have already won 3-2 at Finchampstead Road in a pre-season friendly. Wokingham, too, have not forgotten that defeat and will be keen to exact revenge.

Burnham's Athenian League colleagues Chalfont St Peter entertain Hellenic League Flackwell Heath who caused the shock of the first round by disposing of Aylesbury United, who could well be playing in the Southern League Premier Division next season.

When their match was frosted off recently Heathens went en bloc to watch Chalfont beat Tring Town in the F.A. Vase. They must have been impressed by what they saw and now know they face a stiff task if they are to reach the last eight.

Marlow, who took two matches to dispose of Hazells in the previous round, entertain another Hellenic side in Didcot. The Berkshire outfit are placed fourth in the Premier Division, having lost only twice in the league this season and could take Marlow to a replay.

Amersham, who have surprised even themselves by reaching

the last 64 in the Vase, could also attain the final eight of the Senior Cup. They travel away to previous holders, Thatcham, who have won only one game in the Hellenic League this season. Magpies will be without new goalkeeper Steve Redwood whose debut is delayed by a hand injury.

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Enfield	24	19	4	1	57	16	61
Wycombe	23	15	2	6	41	24	47
Hitchin	23	13	5	5	40	25	44
Leatherhead	23	12	6	5	43	22	42
Tooting	24	12	6	6	36	27	42
Dagenham	25	12	4	9	45	37	40
Croydon	23	11	4	8	36	31	37
Hayes	24	10	6	8	29	28	36
Hendon	26	10	6	10	34	34	36
Staines	23	9	7	7	28	32	34
Carshalton	23	9	6	8	39	33	33
Sutton	22	9	5	8	25	31	32
Slough	23	8	3	12	32	40	27
Walton & St John	19	7	5	7	26	28	26
Barking	22	8	2	12	33	36	26
Boreham W.	18	7	4	7	24	29	25
Woking	20	6	1	13	30	38	19
Leytonstone	24	3	10	11	27	41	19
Southall	22	4	7	11	21	39	19
Tilbury	20	4	6	10	27	36	18
Kingsmead	22	4	5	13	21	34	17
Stortford	23	1	6	16	21	54	9

HELLENIC LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
C. Norton	14	11	2	1	37	9	35
Hungerford	13	9	1	3	30	10	28
Newbury	13	8	3	2	27	12	27
Didcot	12	6	4	2	19	11	22
Thame	11	5	4	2	14	10	19
Pinehurst	12	5	3	4	15	19	18
Moreton	9	5	2	2	15	11	17
Fairford	12	4	3	5	12	14	15
Clifffield	16	4	3	9	18	26	15
Abingdon	13	4	2	7	15	26	14
Wallingford	11	3	4	4	16	16	13
Flackwell	11	4	1	6	16	19	13
Abingdon	14	2	5	7	17	30	11
Forest G.	9	2	4	3	16	19	10
Thatcham	13	1	5	7	11	28	8
Greenwich	13	1	2	10	12	30	5